

# Retiring trial court judges honored

November 3, 2010

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. presented certificates of appreciation to veteran trial judges who did not seek reelection and are scheduled to retire in December. Seven of the 11 retiring judges attended the Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Jackson on Oct. 28.

Madison County Court Judge William Agin was recognized for a career of public service which includes 28 years as Madison County Court and Youth Court Judge. Presiding Justice George C. Carlson Jr., who read the citations, noted Judge Agin's creation of the Madison County Juvenile Drug Court, his service as Chairman of the Conference of County Court Judges and Council of Youth Court Judges, his service on the Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee and Media and the Courts Study Committee, and his 35 years as a member of the Mississippi Bar.

Hinds County Court Judge William Barnett was recognized for a career of public service which includes 16 years as Hinds County Court Judge, 16 years as Jackson Municipal Judge, two years as Municipal judge pro tempore, two years as Jackson assistant prosecuting attorney, and five years as Hinds County Chancery Special Master. He was commended for his service on the Public Defender Commission, as well as 39 years as a member of the Mississippi Bar.

Chancery Judge Sebe Dale Jr. of Columbia was recognized for a 42-year career of public service. For the past 32 years, he has served as judge of the 10<sup>th</sup> Chancery District. He previously served 10 years as Youth Court Referee. The Chief Justice commended Judge Dale's 62 years as a member of the Bar, and his leadership, which includes chairmanships of the Conference of Chancery Judges, the Mississippi Judicial College Board of Governors, and Mississippi Children's Code Commission. He is a former president of the Marion County Bar Association and a former Bar Commissioner.

The Conference of Chancery Judges also presented Judge Dale with a plaque recognizing his 32 years of service as a chancellor. The 10<sup>th</sup> Chancery District includes Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River and Perry counties.

Circuit Judge Henry L. Lackey of Calhoun City was recognized for a career of public service which includes 17 years as Circuit Judge of the 3rd Judicial District, eight years as attorney for the Calhoun County Board of Supervisors, one year as the state's first public defender, and four years as Calhoun County prosecuting attorney. Presiding Justice Carlson, who read the commendations, noted Judge Lackey's chairmanship of the Commission on Judicial Performance, and his 44 years as a member of the Bar. The 3rd Circuit includes Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Lafayette, Marshall, Tippah and Union counties.

Circuit Judge Samac Richardson of Brandon was recognized for a career of public service which includes 13 years as Circuit Judge of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Rankin and Madison counties, five years as Rankin County Court Judge, six years as assistant district attorney, five years as public defender, five years as Rankin County School Board hearing

officer, and three years as Pearl city attorney. Judge Richardson served as chair of both the Conference of Circuit Judges and the Conference of County Court Judges. He is a former member of the Bar Complaint Tribunal and the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Rules. He has been a member of the Mississippi Bar for 32 years.

Circuit Judge Kenneth L. Thomas of Cleveland was recognized for a career of public service which includes 16 years as Circuit Judge of the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, including 10 years as senior judge. He previously served for four years as Bolivar County Court Judge. He has been a member of the Mississippi Bar for more than 32 years. The 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit District includes Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman and Tunica counties.

Harrison County Court Judge Michael H. Ward of Gulfport was recognized for a career of public service which includes 12 Years as County Court and Youth Court Judge, 20 years as Harrison County Family Court Judge, chair of the Mississippi Commission on Uniform Youth Court System and Procedures, service on the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education, and 39 years as a member of the Bar.

Other judges who are retiring in December but who were not at the fall conference are 17<sup>th</sup> District Circuit Judge Andrew C. Baker of Charleston, 7<sup>th</sup> Chancery District Judge William G. Willard Jr. of Clarksdale, and 7<sup>th</sup> District Circuit Judge Swan Yerger of Jackson.

Justice Waller also recognized Chancery Judge Margaret Alfonso, who did not attend the conference. Judge Alfonso, of Gulfport, will complete 12 years of service on the 8<sup>th</sup> Chancery bench in December. She did not seek reelection as a chancellor. She was elected Nov. 2 to the position of Harrison County Court Judge – the position being vacated by Judge Ward. She will be sworn in to the County Court bench in January. The County Court also hears Youth Court matters.

Judge Alfonso previously served for four years as 2nd Circuit assistant district attorney, five years as assistant prosecuting attorney for Harrison County, three years as prosecuting attorney for Harrison County Family Court, and three years as assistant state's attorney for Cook County, Ill. She has been a member of the bar for 34 years. She is a founding member of Professionals Advocating for Children Together, served as a member of the Media and the Courts Study Committee and the Commission for Study of Domestic Abuse Proceedings, and recently was appointed to the Access to Justice Commission.

Judge Baker's career of public service includes more than 32 years as Circuit Judge of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and three months as special chancery judge. He served on the State Penitentiary Board, Mississippi Court Reporters Association Board of Directors, and Mississippi College School of Law Moot Court Board. He has been a member of the Mississippi Bar for 44 years. The 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit District includes DeSoto, Panola, Tallahatchie, Tate and Yalobusha counties.

Judge Willard's career of public service includes 12 years as Chancellor of the 7<sup>th</sup> Chancery District, nine and one-half years as Clarksdale Municipal Judge, service on the Bar Complaints Tribunal, as well as 36 years as a member of the Bar. The 7<sup>th</sup> Chancery District includes Bolivar, Coahoma, Leflore, Quitman, Tallahatchie and Tunica counties.

Judge Yerger's career of public service includes 14 years as Circuit Judge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Hinds County. He has been a member of the Mississippi Bar for 52 years.